New York, the Many Citied City, All Things to All People

CHINATOWN

THE TYPICAL EAST SIDE STREET.

MULBERRY STREET

What the Great Metropolis Means to You Depends Upon Your Viewpoint—Drear, Gay, Freakish, Ancient, New, Are Some of Its Many Moods

By EILEEN O'CONNOR.

TO every New Yorker his New York.

But as there are many New Yorkers, so there are many New Yorks. The world's new metropolis, like all things else mundane, depends for the impression it makes largely upon the point of view. What we see has close and direct relation to where we stand. The 6,000,000 souled city is to us that zone in which we live and work. Our accustomed personal path is the limit of our vision.

Miss Jessie Ashley, the venerable lawyer and reformer, died a few hours after she had written her last words. Her penned adjuration to her fellow workers ended with "New York is many cities in one."

Once the New Yorker undertaking the task of convoying his country cousin about New York began his running talk as you walk or ride lecture with: "The city is built upon Manhattan Island. The island is wedge shaped, the point being at the Battery. The city is bisected by a diagonal street beginning at the Battery and called Broadway. You may regard New York as a wheel revolving upon the hub of Broadway."

This succinct statement was a reliable guide. But latterly it gives but a limited survey of the greatest city on earth. Like London, it is without apparent plan. Greater New York has become a group of lesser cities.

Each Group Distinctive.

Each group has its distinct personality. Each city within a city possesses its individuality as surely as does Washington, St. Louis, New Orleans or San Francisco.

Who that has an abode uptown and regards downtown as the place of big business knows that there is a resident downtown? Yet as cells in a honeycomb among the towering office buildings that seem about to slip off the toe of the city, which is the Battery, are homes where babes are born and the old die. Small, old houses are some of these, flat houses others, in which the human drama is played from its beginning to its end.

Within sound of the bells of old St. Paul's Chapel, more ancient than our independence, and St. John's, the two oldest church edifices on Manhattan Island, enough men and women live to crowd a western city. They are denizens of the known downtown. They live in faded brick houses in Rose street, less fragrant than its name indicates, that rays diagonally north from the first and furthest south of East River's bridges, which because it is the pioneer of the city's joining ways of steel and wood is still called Brooklyn Bridge. Their homes are in City Hall Place, that short street of venerable three story houses that extends northward from City Hall Park. In one of these lived and died from unselfish overwork at her task the city missionary, Rose Martin.

"Where do these children come from?" impatiently demanded a financier whose daily path from upper Fifth avenue to his office in a Wall street bank building includes a dash, when dashes are possible, through Nassau street.

"They live here."

"Where?"

"Around here." The chauffeur's head turned owllike nearly around upon his neck, but his glance was vague. The children were dwellers of unknown downtown.

Wraiths of the Past.

Unknown downtown, the resident portion, is no street, nor square, but comprises little tucked away, nearly forgotten and all but tumbledown houses. Servitors their inmates are, for the most part, of the prosperous folk in the banks and office buildings. But occasionally you will see framed in one of the windows a face that reminds you of a withered flower. Its owner, knowing herself observed, leaves the window, and one passes feeling that he has had glimpse of a ghost. A wraith of the past has crossed his path and vanished. A gentlewoman clinging for her few remaining days to the old memory filled home has been interrupted in her street gazing and her sad thoughts of the Then as in contrast with the Now. Decayed gentility has met your eyes for a moment, has taken fright and fled.

Those who live remote from the city that has been called the great funnel through which all the races are poured know, though they have never visited it, its Italian district, termed Mulberry Bend, and its yet more crowded Ghetto on the east side. But they do not know, nor does the New Yorker unless it be in his zone, the cosmopolitan city that lies in and about Washington street.

There live Armenians and their congenital foes, the Turks. Mingle with them the soft eyed, soft voiced Greeks. Thither adventure courageous uptown women in search of laces and other treasures of handiwork. They see shops and restaurants that are of Constantinople rather than New York. They feel that they are within the shadows of a mosque. And when they sink into their automobiles or shoulder their upward way into the subway, they breathe deeply as one who has thrown off the incubus of something strange and terrifying. While other and gentler races are freely represented in the cosmopolite city the shadow of the Turk lies darkest and heaviest upon the imagination.

Where Stage Folk Dwell.

That part of the city dominated by the spirit of the stage begins at Thirtieth street and ends with Sixty-third. The square red brick building, now alluded to as Old Daly's with the same respectful tone in which they speak in London of Old Drury, is the landmark of the south. The Century Theatre, christened the New when it was the plaything of earnest millionaires, is the milestone of the north. Other theatres beyond these border lines are neighborhood centres of amusement. Stageland includes forty-six houses devoted to the legitimate drama and an unnumbered assemblage of motion picture shelters.

The personnel of the boards may be found near the footlight workshop. The average actor, as his brother workman, prefers to be near the scene of his labor. For it is labor. George W. Lederer, long the manager of the Casino, said: "The actor does not work long, but he works hard." His is indeed a concentrative task.

The glittering hotels built around the axis of Broadway and Forty-second street owe their being to the theatre folk and their patrons. In smart apartments near Central Park, yet within a few minutes' walk or a few seconds' drive of the theatres in which they appear, live Frances Starr, Florence Reed, Florence Nash and Gladys Hanson. On the cross streets, in boarding houses or lodgings, live humbler folk of the stage. In one of these, a $6 a week abode in the West Thirties, lived the young woman known in the motion picture studios, who, sick and in a state of semi-starvation, passed a forged check and was paroled by the court because of her need and the fact that she pleaded that she committed the crime while under the influence of a will stronger than her own.

From such meagre quarters come reports of suicide by despondent folk of the stage. The most notable of these was that of Miss Elsie Clarens, the beautiful stranger from Australia, the termination of whose earthly career coincided with the completion of a motion picture she was making with Miss Jane Cowl.

Stageland has a conspicuous characteristic besides its oft cited streams of light and its refectories where, in company with ornaments of the chorus, land lobsters consume those of the sea variety. That characteristic is the Broadway smile. The Knight of the Rueful Countenance never stalks on the bias street. The only Dolores who ever walked its length was an elongated model of that name, who strolled sans frown and with an intermittent smile.

It is a common law on the diagonal highway that no one must ever appear on it with disconsolate visage. His heart may have been broken, his life shattered by some new, overnight merger of amusement interests, but he must smile until he reaches the corner and turns into a side street. Then he may blow out his brains if he likes. In this respect, and in the matter of its big stakes of hopes and money, it is like the gaming paradise of the Mediterranean. It is the Western Hemisphere's Monte Carlo.

Shelf Town is more imposing than its name. It comprises that vast area of the city which is occupied by those who live in the substitutes for homes classified as apartment hotels. It reaches its pinnacle of magnificence on the borders of Central Park and on that part of the Hudson's shore called Riverside Drive.

The latest development of the city's resources of beauty is that avenue of quiet and of green oblongs that has its beginning at Thirty-fourth street above the subway's incessant action and continues on its northward way with the interruption of the Grand Central Station's marble edifice.

Park avenue is the new favorite home of leisured folk who reckon their fortunes in seven figures. Mr. and Mrs. John Hays Hammond, coming from Washington's circle of homes, chose Park avenue for their habitat. Alice de la Mar, heiress of the late Capt. de la Mar, elected to live there rather than on Fifth avenue. When Elsie Ferguson married Thomas Clark, Jr., the young vice-president of the Harriman National Bank, they set up their expensive dovecote, commanding a view of one of the greenest of the oblong plazas that are as oases in the wide white boulevard. Over Park avenue abodes hangs a quiet like that of leisurely Washington—when Congress is not in session. Upon it are no encroaching shops.

One of the smallest of the cities within a city is the region of the upper West One Hundred Thirties and One Hundred Forties, where "without being a millionaire one can have a real house." So said a rosy matron who knows the value of the out of doors as a health builder and who wanted to "bring up healthy children." A treasure of her menage and that of many of her neighbors is a back yard. The house turns a massive front upon the street. One ascends to it by a row of high brownstone steps. But the kitchen porch and the sleeping porch above give upon a stretch of well cared for sward and a tiny vegetable and flower garden and look upon a rustic swing and a bench of twisted oak branches. The children call it the playground, the matron our private sanitarium.

WASHINGTON STREET.

To Washington Heights families move their Lares and Penates, moved by a double consideration. The purity of the air, the inspiration of the view provided by nature are powerful motives. But a strong magnet is the historic atmosphere of the high western point in the city, scene of encampments of the patriotic army during the war of the revolution. It has a historic tale for every block. In its centre stands the white Colonial house that bears still the name "Mme. Jumel's Mansion." To Mme. Jumel's house in the country went visiting prankish Jerome Bonaparte, who disturbed a dinner by stepping into the dining room unannounced through a window. To the home of the reputed Old World adventuress, certainly the widow of the wealthy Stephen Jumel, went wooing Aaron Burr. The Daughters of the American Revolution are its owners. It is a museum of relics of epochs in American history.

"I moved to Greenwich Village," said a woman lately widowed.

"I congratulate you," I said. "It is smart to be a villager."

"I'm not going there because it's smart." She pinched her purse to denote its leanness.

That is the practical side of New York's resurgence of Bohemian life, now at its high tide in the part of the city which lies south and southwest of Washington Square.

"I like it," a litterateur said, "because it is the only place in New York where one feels he is an individual."

But after the soap bubbles of fancy are blown, truly frank folk, and there are many who live below the arch, say:

"I live here because it is cheap."

Granted Greenwich Village has atmosphere. Following that wicked example quoted by Europeans to prove that Americans are without reverence, "Our President has taste and it is very bad," Greenwich Village has atmosphere and it is not fragrant. Dwellers therein make the best of their bargain and dream of the time when their work will sell and the artists can move into studios near Central Park and the writers own their apartments in a community shelf dwelling.

Greenwich Village stands for untrammelled thought and irregular hours. In token of the irregular hours is the Garret that provides breakfast for its patrons all day and tea all evening, and the Black Parrot, a tea room kept by Amelia Rose, a famous model, where the tea hour begins at 8 of the evening and ends at 1 of the morning. It has a crowded restaurant, reached by passing through a dark alley of murderous suggestion, an outside staircase that promises fatal accidents, across a first story roof, and called for no obvious reason the Samovar. Five minutes away is the Pig and Whistle of Dickensian origin, where one sits on cushioned benches and indulges gas log reflections. It has its new theatre, democratically named for the section, and with a classic and, I beg you to believe me, for I've seen it, clean, gray facade.

Curiously, high above the Village flames a cross. Through blackness and starlight it paints itself against the night sky. It tops Judson Chapel, for the upward gaze and guidance of Tiny Tim, the ex-actor who talks of esoteric manifestations and peddles candy at a quarter a basket; for Bobby Edwards, who forsook art to play and manufacture ukeleles; for Irene Fraher, who for seven years was of Richard Mansfield's company and for four years his leading woman, and who took his last curtain call with him; for William J. Hurlbut, the playwright who wrote dramas for Olga Nethersole and Blanche Bates and Laura Hope Crews, and for Rose Cecil O'Neil, who terms herself the Mother of the Kewpies.

The East Side.

Dr. Annie Daniel, the Little Doctor of the East Side, who for nearly forty years has practised gratuitously among the poor, is a stout defender of the immigrant. "He is not inimical to the welfare of the United States," she asserts. "If he were he would remain in the state of development in which he arrives. Instead he works hard and dreams of getting out of his environment. I have watched three generations grow up in the East Side. The first improves its condition there. The second further improves it. The third invariably moves out. It is not true that any one lives in the congested district from choice. Proof of this is that those who move from it go to districts where they have more space and better air, Staten Island, New Jersey or The Bronx.

When the subway tunnelled itself northward and emerged at 242d street a new city sprang into being. That far north of the Manhattanites, a little nearer than Boston, less remote than the north pole and known for the existence therein of the Bronx Zoo, quickly became a city of 800,000 souls, larger than Cincinnati, larger than Cleveland. Forty per cent. of the population is Jewish. It is the city of wider spaces, the town of greater chance, the realization of hopes long deferred.

That public spirited young matron, worthy wife of a worthy American, Mrs. Vincent Astor, sent invitations to the women of the neighborhood and asked, "What can we do for our part of town?"

"Our part of town" is Yorkville, that region extending eastward from Central Park to Third avenue and northward from the Sixties to the Eighties. Yorkville that to the New Yorker, his eyes on his own daily path, means a court or jail and a stock company of that name.

Most of Mrs. Astor's invitations were accepted. The women whom she greeted as neighbors came in limousines, on street cars, or walked to the Astor home on Fifth avenue. They wore feather trimmed hats at $10 a feather, or shawls on their heads. They discussed conditions, agreed to work for the betterment of the neighborhood and drank tea. Mrs. Astor, slim, blond, girlish, smiled at them. Said she: "We ought to work for Yorkville's interests."

Harlem, whose southern border is 106th street and whose northern is the curving Harlem River, is the hope of those who want better homes for less money than heretofore they have paid. Thither go many brides for their adventurous experiments in housekeeping. It is a favored spot for the spreading of the stork's wings. For after the East Side and Brooklyn Harlem is most popular with the infant population.

Dwellers in Skytown.

Little recognized but significant is that city within New York city, Skytown. Health guides and our own common sense have pointed to the roofs. They have told us the roofs represent at least one-third of the city's area. Why not utilize it for recreation, for health conservation, for bodily comfort and mental peace? In response to this awakening we see roof gardens atop a half dozen of the smart hotels. The Waldorf-Astoria, the Astor, the Majestic draw New Yorkers to Skytown. Manhattanites emulate on a small scale this movement to raise us nearer the stars and to companion us with clouds.

Donald Brian, the matinee idol, attributes his perpetual youthful slimness and his continuous fitness to the fact that for two years he has resided in a cottage on the roof of a skyscraper. His cloud piercing home was atop the roof of 18 East Forty-first street, an office building that is the next door neighbor of the house that was once Maude Adams's home. William Faversham built a sound proof bed chamber on the roof of his home on East Seventeenth street. Scan those faint, far dots on city roofs, for they may be the outdoor chambers built by those who would live and sleep above the city's roar and provide for their children an aerial playground. They are the works of those of great wisdom who would lead the country life in the city.

Oldest Tulip Tree on Manhattan Isle

On the extreme northern end of Manhattan Island there is a tulip tree which, though it is said to be 231 years old, and if so may be the oldest tree on the island, still appears to be in its prime, and in the early summer is almost entirely covered with foliage.

It is situated on the north side of Inwood Hill toward the Harlem ship canal, which joins the Hudson. It stands in a clearing surrounded by a picket fence erected in October, 1913.

The spot is historically associated with the Indians. Here in 1609 when Hendrik Hudson landed in the Spuyten Duyvil inlet he is supposed to have met members of the Weck-quaesteeks tribe.

Large quantities of broken oyster shells are embedded beneath the top soil, and it is said the spot was a great haunt of the Indians, who used it as a meeting place.

The tree in circumference is about nineteen feet. It is 125 feet tall. A few rotted cavities have been filled with cement. An inscription was placed on the tree when the fence was built around it.